

## Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 BRUSSE 01945 01 OF 02 291950Z

72

ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 IO-14 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03

SS-20 USIA-15 DRC-01 EB-11 /144 W

----- 013908

R 291846Z MAR 74

FM AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 356

INFO AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BRUSSELS 1945

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, BE, CG

SUBJECT: BELGIAN-ZAIRIAN DISPUTE OVER ANTI-MOBUTU BOOK

REF: KINSHASA 2647

1. SUMMARY. AS RESULT OF CONTROVERSY OVER BOOK BY BELGIAN LEFTIST CRITICIZING PRESIDENT MOBUTU, FOREIGN MINISTER VAN ELSLANDE HAS TRANSMITTED STATEMENT TO GOZ RE-AFFIRMING BELGIAN INTEREST IN COOPERATION WITH ZAIRE BUT CALLING FOR RESPECT FOR BELGIUM'S TRADITION OF FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION. FONMIN AFRICA DIRECTOR BELIEVES MOBUTU MAY BE USING BOOK AS EXCUSE TO AVOID IMPENDING TALKS ON INDEMNIFICATION FOR EXPROPRIATED BELGIAN PROPERTIES AND MAY HAVE BEEN INFLUENCED IN HIS ATTITUDE BY BELGIAN JOURNALIST, PIERRE DAVISTER. GOB IS NOT INCLINED AT PRESENT TO MAKE FURTHER CONCILIATORY MOVE TOWARD MOBUTU BUT HOPES THAT GOOD RELATIONS WILL BE ALLOWED QUIETLY TO RESUME. END SUMMARY.

2. FONMIN VAN ELSLANDE ON MARCH 28 GAVE WRITTEN STATEMENT SETTING FORTH OFFICIAL BELGIAN POSITION ON CONTROVERSY OVER JULES CHOME'S BOOK ON PRESIDENT MOBUTU TO ZAIRIAN AMBASSADOR ELEBE, WHO DEPARTS FOR KINSHASA MARCH 29 FOR CONSULTATIONS. STATEMENT, US CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 BRUSSE 01945 01 OF 02 291950Z

POSSESSION OF WHICH SHOULD BE TREATED AS NOFORN, MAKES

FOLLOWING POINTS.

3. GOB REGRETS POSITION TAKEN BY MOBUTU ON BELGIAN-ZAIRIAN RELATIONS. BELGIANS DESIRE EXPANDING RELATIONS WITH ZAIRE. GUIDED BY BELGIAN-ZAIRIAN TREATY OF FRIENDSHIP, GOB POLICY IS FOUNDED ON RESPECT FOR ZAIRIAN SOVEREIGNTY, EQUALITY BETWEEN TWO COUNTRIES, AND DESIRE FOR EXPANDING COOPERATION, COLLABORATION, AND CONSULTATION. GOB IN PAST HAS CONDEMNED IRRESPONSIBLE ACTIONS OF CERTAIN BELGIAN CITIZENS IN ZAIRE AND DISAPPROVES TODAY ACTIONS WHICH MAY DISTURB BELGIAN-ZAIRIAN RELATIONS. THOSE RELATIONS MUST TAKE ACCOUNT OF DIVERSITY OF NATIONAL POLITICAL TRADITIONS. BELGIUM RESPECTS ZAIRE'S LAWS AND HOPES GOB RECOGNIZES THAT ACTION OF ONE BELGIAN CITIZEN DOES NOT ENGAGE GOB. BECAUSE OF FREEDOM OF OPINION GOB DOES NOT BAN PUBLICATIONS SETTING FORTH OPINIONS WHICH CONFLICT WITH VIEWS OF STATE OR IMMENSE MAJORITY OF POPULATION. PROBLEM IS ONE FOR JUDICIAL AUTHORITIES, WHO ARE NOW STUDYING SALE OF CHOME BOOK. ZAIRIAN ASSERTION THAT SALE AND PUBLICITY OF BOOK WAS ASSISTED BY BELGIAN AUTHORITIES IS UNFOUNDED AND UNFAIR. BELGIUM HAS FULL CONFIDENCE IN MOBUTU'S WILL TO CONTINUE TO ASSUME RESPONSIBILITIES TOWARD FOREIGN RESIDENTS, A PRINCIPLE WHICH TWO STATES HAVE ALWAYS APPLIED WITH RECIPROCITY. BELGIUM AND ZAIRE ALWAYS HAVE SHOWN WILL TO COOPERATE DESPITE DIFFICULT MOMENTS. GOB WELCOMES MOBUTU'S SUGGESTION TO REVIEW ALL ASPECTS OF RELATIONS AFTER NEW BELGIAN GOVERNMENT FORMED.

4. AT PRESS CONFERENCE AFTER MEETING WITH ELEBE, VAN ELSLANDE DECLINED TO DISCUSS CONTENTS OF STATEMENT BUT REITERATED THAT ACTS OF INDIVIDUAL SHOULD NOT BE TAKEN TO REPRESENT OFFICIAL VIEWS OF GOB. STATEMENT WAS SECONDS ON CHOME CASE BY GOB IN PAST FEW DAYS. ON MARCH 26 FOREIGN MINISTRY SPOKESMAN PUBLICLY HAD POINTED OUT THAT UNDER BELGIAN RULES ON FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION, THERE CAN BE NO ADMINISTRATIVE CONTROL OVER CIRCULATION OF BOOKS EXCEPT ON MORAL GROUNDS. ONLY WAY TO BLOCK CIRCULATION OF OFFENSIVE PUBLICATION IS TO BRING MATTER FORMALLY BEFORE JUDICIAL AUTHORITIES.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 BRUSSE 01945 01 OF 02 291950Z

BELGIAN PRESS QUOTED PRESIDENT MOBUTU AS HAVING REACTED TO FOREIGN MINISTRY STATEMENT AS "A FLIGHT FROM RESPONSIBILITIES AND A MANIFESTATION OF CHARACTERISTIC HYPOCRISY."

3. FONMIN AFRICA DIRECTOR LEBRUN HAS TOLD EMBOFF THAT FOR MOMENT GOB IS NOT DISPOSED TO TAKE FURTHER STEPS IN CONTROVERSY OVER CHOME BOOK. HE COMMENTED THAT

CARETAKER GOVERNMENT WOULD NOT TAKE DOMESTIC POLITICAL RISK OF TAKING MORE CONCILIATORY STANCE IN VIEW OF CRITICAL REACTION OF BELGIAN PRESS TO THREAT TO FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION. IT HIGHLY POSSIBLE, HOWEVER, THAT NEW GOVERNMENT, ONCE FORMED, WILL INCLUDE STATEMENT IN ITS PROGRAM CALLING FOR CONTINUED COOPERATION AND AMICABLE RELATIONS WITH ZAIRE. LEBRUN EXPRESSED BELIEF THAT MOBUTU'S REACTION IN CHOME EPISODE IS MOTIVATED BY CONCERNS OTHER THAN SIMPLE OFFENSE OVER BOOK. THIS VIEW IS SUPPORTED, HE BELIEVES, BUT FACT THAT MOBUTU APPEARED RELAXED ABOUT BOOK WHEN IT CAME UP DURING CONVERSATION WITH CHARGE CAHEN BEFORE LATTER'S DEPARTURE FROM KINSHASA. (IT SHOULD BE NOTED, HOWEVER, THAT SEVERAL WEEKS BEFORE MOBUTU'S PUBLIC COMPLAINT RE BOOK, ZAIRIAN EMBASSY HAD CALLED ON FOREIGN MINISTRY NOT TO ALLOW CHOME TO PUBLICIZE IT.) POINTING OUT THAT TWO SIDES HAD AGREED DURING PRIME MINISTER LEBURTON'S CALL ON MOBUTU IN MUNICH IN FEBRUARY TO MEET AT MINISTERIAL LEVEL BETWEEN MARCH 15 AND APRIL 15 TO DISCUSS INDEMNIFICATION FOR EXPROPRIATION OF BELGIAN PROPERTIES. LEBRUN SAID THAT MOBUTU'S DECISION TO DISSOLVE BELGIAN-ZAIRIAN "MIXED COMMISSION" AND ALLOW NO OFFICIAL BELGIAN ACCESS TO HIS ENTOURAGE (REFTEL) APPEARED TO BE DESIGNED TO AVOID, OR AT LEAST DELAY, THOSE SCHEDULED TALKS.

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 BRUSSE 01945 02 OF 02 291959Z

72

ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 IO-14 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03

SS-20 USIA-15 DRC-01 EB-11 /144 W

----- 014034

R 291846Z MAR 74

FM AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 357

INFO AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 BRUSSELS 1945

4. LEBRUN BELIEVES IT POSSIBLE THAT PIERRE DAVISTER, MOBUTU ASSOCIATE AND DIRECTOR OF BELGIAN WEEKLY "SPECIAL", ALSO MAY HAVE INFLUENCED MOBUTU'S ATTITUDE. NOTING THAT CHOME HAS BROUGHT LEGAL CHARGES AGAINST DAVISTER FOR VICIOUS EDITORIAL THREATENING CHOME'S SAFETY (POUCHED TO DEPARTMENT AND KINSHASA MARCH 15), LEBRUN SAID THAT DAVISTER MAY HAVE ENCOURAGED STRONG REACTION FROM MOBUTU IN ORDER TO RING FOREIGN POLICY CONSIDERATION TO BEAR ON BELGIAN TRIBUNAL'S ULTIMATE DECISION IN HIS CASE. LEBRUN SAID THAT DAVISTER HAD FLOWN TO KINSHASA ON VERY SHORT NOTICE AND WAS THERE DURING MARCH 22 MEETING OF STATE COMMISSIONERS AT WHICH CHOME BOOK WAS DISCUSSED.

5. LEBRUN EXPRESSED CONVICTION THAT MOBUTU DOES NOT INTEND TO USE CHOME EPISODE TO CALL INTO QUESTION RECENT COPPER AGREEMENT WITH SOCIETE GENERALE DES MINERAIS, IF NO OTHER REASON THAN THAT MOBUTU WANTS SGM HELP IN BUILDING NEW COPPER REFINERY. HE SAID DIRECTION THIS NEW CRISIS TAKES DEPENDS ON WHETHER MOBUTU WISHES TO ALLOW NORMAL RELATIONS TO RESUME QUIETLY OR HAS DECIDED TO STIR UP HATE CAMPAIGN AGAINST BELGIANS. LEBRUN NOTED THAT BELGIAN EDUCATIONAL TEAM NOW VISITING KINSHASA IS PURSUING WORK NORMALLY WITH ZAIRIAN AUTHORITIES. HE TOOK THIS AS HOPEFUL SIGN THAT RELATIONS WOULD NOT DETERIORATE FURTHER.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 BRUSSE 01945 02 OF 02 291959Z

6. BELGIAN PRESS REPORTED MARCH 29 THAT BRUSSELS CORRESPONDENT FOR ZAIRIAN PAPER SALONGO HAD QUOTED SOCIAL CHRISTIAN LEADER LEO TINDEMANS (WHO IS EXPECTED TO BE NEXT BELGIAN PRIME MINISTER) AS SAYING PRIVATELY THAT HE IS "NOT AFRAID OF MOBUTU." PRESS REPORTS SOURCES IN TINDEMANS' ENTOURAGE AS DENYING HE HAD MADE SUCH STATEMENT. CATHOLIC LA LIBRE BELGIQUE SAYS ALLEGED STATEMENT POSSIBLY CONNECTED WITH TINDEMANS' CRITICISM OF SOCIALIST PRIME MINISTER LEBURTON LAST YEAR FOR BASING RELATIONS WITH ZAIRE TO TOO GREAT EXTENT ON PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH MOBUTU. LA LIBRE BELGIQUE ALSO DENIES SALONGO REPORT THAT BELGIANS VIEW IMPROVEMENT IN CHARUCH-STATE RELATIONS IN ZAIRE AS CATHOLIC "VICTORY."

7. COMMENT: CHOME'S "L'ASCENSION DE MOBUTU", PUBLISHED IN FRANCE, IS TENDENTIOUS CUT AND PASTE ANTI-MOBUTU POLEMIC WHOSE PUBLICATION WOULD HAVE GAINED ALSO NO ATTENTION HERE IF ZAIRIANS HAD NOT REACTED. FOR BELGIAN PUBLIC, ISSUE HAS NOW BECOME ONE OF DEFENDING FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION. ALTHOUGH CHOME IS TAKEN SERIOUSLY IN FEW QUARTERS, IF ANY, BELGIANS WERE SCANDALIZED BY BEATING ZAIRIAN DEMONSTRATORS GAVE HIM DURING LECTURE ON HIS FOOK AT

LIEGE. FOREIGN MINISTRY HAS DECLINED TO MAKE ISSUE OF THAT INCIDENT ALTHOUGH BELGIAN POLICE HAVE EVIDENCE THAT DEMONSTRATORS WERE TRANSPORTED TO LIEGE IN ZAIRIAN EMBASSY VEHICLE. BELGIANS THUS APPEAR INCLINED NEITHER TO TAKE OVERLY CONCILIATORY POSITION TOWARD MOBUTU NOR TO EXACERBATE PROBLEM. THEY APPARENTLY HOPE THAT MOBUTU WILL NOT PRESS TOO HARD AND THAT THERE WILL BE COOLING OFF PERIOD AFTER WHICH RELATIONS CAN BE IMPROVED UNDER NEW BELGIAN GOVERNMENT. WE ARE NOT IN POSITION TO EVALUATE LEBRUN'S SPECULATION ON MOBUTU'S MOTIVES IN CHOME CASE. IT WOULD APPEAR, THOUGH, THAT WHILE LEBRUN MAY UNDERESTIMATE MOBUTU'S GENUINE IRRITATION OVER BOOK, MOBUTU MAY INDEED FEEL THAT EPISODE CAN BE EXPLOITED TO STRENGTHEN ZAIRIAN POSITION IN EVENTUAL TALKS WITH BELGIANS ON INDEMNIFICATION.  
STRAUSZ-HUPE

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** FOREIGN RELATIONS, BOOKS, PRESS CONFERENCES, L ASCENSION DE MOBUTU  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 29 MAR 1974  
**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** golinofr  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1974BRUSSE01945  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** GS  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Film Number:** D740069-0921  
**From:** BRUSSELS  
**Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Image Path:**  
**ISecure:** 1  
**Legacy Key:** link1974/newtext/t1974035/aaaaaefh.tel  
**Line Count:** 238  
**Locator:** TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM  
**Office:** ACTION AF  
**Original Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 5  
**Previous Channel Indicators:**  
**Previous Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** KINSHASA 2647  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** golinofr  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 02 APR 2002  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** RELEASED <02 APR 2002 by collinp0>; APPROVED <05 JUN 2002 by golinofr>  
**Review Markings:**

Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
30 JUN 2005

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** BELGIAN-ZAIRIAN DISPUTE OVER ANTI-MOBUTU BOOK  
**TAGS:** PFOR, BE, CG, (MOBUTU, SESE SEKO), (CHOME, JULES)  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005